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(54) Title: MEDIA ONLINE SERVICES ACCESS SYSTEM AND METHOD

(57) Abstract

A system is disclosed for providing direct automated access to an online information services provider (34a, 34n) through an address embedded in a video or audio program, commercial message, or news story. The system operates with video or audio programs (15) which are received through broadcast, cable or pre-recorded media, and which are encoded in either analog or digital formats. The address of an online information provider is encoded in a vertical blanking interval or other non-displayed portion of an electronic signal which represents the video or audio program so as not to interfere with the programs as displayed or transduced on a television or audio sound system (22, 40). The online information provider address is detected and decoded from the electronic signal and used in establishing a direct digital communication link to the online information provider (34a, 34n).

